

**Regional Language TV****Growth and Development of Regional Television -  
Kannada****N.USHA RANI****Abstract**

*Researchers have estimated that there are more than 780 languages in India and the list continues to grow. Today there is greater realization of the need to preserve linguistic heterogeneity and yet again media has come to the rescue of lesser-known languages that are being crushed under the weight of language of the majorities. The State of Karnataka is the home for Kannada language spoken by the majority of the population. Kannada journalism was built on the citadels of rich heritage of Kannada literature. The language policy gave an impetus to the growth of language media in the State. Regional TV channels have become bastion of local culture reflecting language, life style, socio-economic status, and aspirations of the regional people. Tracing the growth of Kannada TV media shows that market segmentation on linguistic basis has led to the control of key media market by big corporate empire enjoying the support of advertisers.*

**Keywords;** Kannada TV Channels, Doordarshan, Private TV Channels

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**KARNATAKA - A LANGUAGE PROFILE**

India is a land of languages of all hues and shades and linguistic plurality is one of its cultural identities. Researchers have estimated that there are more than 780 languages in India and the list continues to grow. Today there is greater realization of the need to preserve linguistic heterogeneity and yet again media has come to the rescue of lesser known languages that are getting crushed under the weight of language of the majorities. India has given official language status to 18 languages. The State of Karnataka is the home for Kannada language spoken by the majority of the population and exists along with historically significant linguistic minorities speaking Kodava, Konkani and Tulu languages.

The State of Karnataka was formed on November 1, 1956 as a result of implementation of States Reorganization Act 1956 on linguistic basis. The State earlier known as Mysore was the

princely state ruled by *Wadeyar* dynasty – the Kings of Mysore, and it became one of the Indian States after India gained Independence as the *Wadeyars* of Mysore acceded the State into the Republic of India on August 9, 1947 consequent to unification of princely states of India. The mother tongue of the people, Kannada was recognized as the official language of the State and linguistic harmony required for balanced growth of the state. The geographical parts of, Nizam's Hyderabad, Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency and the Kodagu were integrated into the State of Mysore in 1956 to unify Kannada speaking people. The Mysore state was renamed as Karnataka State on November 1, 1973. The new state initially had 8 districts of erstwhile Mysore state (Mysore, Mandya, Bangalore, Kolar, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Chickmagalur and Hassan), 4 districts of Bombay-Karnataka region (Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur and Uttara Kannada), 3 districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka (Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur), 2 districts of Madras-Karnataka (Bellary and Dakshina Kannada) and Coorg district. The new state was formed in 1956 with 18 districts. Interestingly, by 2014 the state had 30 districts to reduce regional imbalances in development.

Kannada journalism was built on the citadels of rich heritage of Kannada literature. The history of Kannada literature dates back to 9<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of classic literature *Kavirajamarga* by King Nrupatunga. Kannada literature was enriched by ancient literature, *vachana sahitya*, modernist literature and *Dalit Banadaya* literature. The growth of Kannada literature was scuttled during 18<sup>th</sup> century due to British onslaught and surge of Islamic rule that established new art, architecture, culture and language. The rebirth of Kannada literature in 19<sup>th</sup> century assumes importance due to two factors. Firstly, it reestablishes the supremacy of Kannada language and secondly, it laid firm foundation for the birth of Kannada journalism. The birth of printing press is attributed to the arrival of Christian missionaries in India who came with the purpose of religious propaganda. Kannada as a language did not tread the path of significant growth due to apathy, indifference, dearth of resources and lop sided language policy in post colonial rule. The reorganization of states on linguistic basis was aimed at plugging regional imbalances by bringing all Kannada speaking people under one homogeneous geographic domain. The central government's policy to impose Hindi language on Karnataka met with opposition in a multilingual society like India. The language movement that is considered as the watershed in the history of state is Gokak movement. Kannada writers became torch bearers of the society who gained visibility in the press through their powerful writings during language

agitation. Kannada press became vehicle for the propagation of writers' thoughts and views on the importance of Kannada leading to new awakening and enlightenment in the society. The movement vibrantly supported by the Kannada press shook the conscience of the State and posed a huge challenge to political powers that always took Kannada speaking people for granted. Nevertheless, the language policy gave an impetus to the growth of language media in the State.

## **KANNADA TV CHANNELS - GROWTH AND HISTORY**

### **HISTORY OF DOORDARSHAN**

Karnataka state considered as the IT bowl of India ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in Human Development Index (2011-12), has a population of 64.06 million (50.9% Male and 49.1% Female) and a literacy rate of 75.7 percent (Male 82.85 percent and Female 68.13 percent). Television came to the state of Karnataka through SITE - Satellite Instructional Television Experiment that covered 2400 villages across six states including Karnataka. SITE is a milestone in the history of communication in India. It was a turning point in the development of mass media in India. The experiment facilitated the establishment of basic infrastructure and mobilizing of human resources in six states namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. In Karnataka, the SITE experiment was conducted in the districts of Gulbarga, Bijapur and Raichur. The State came under the television radar during SITE telecast with TV studio and relay centre established in Gulbarga. The experiment of SITE from August 1, 1975 to July 31, 1976 resulted in the telecast of programs for the first time ever in the state through TV sets installed in the community centres in the villages. When the SITE project ended after one year, people wanted the services to continue. The exposure of people to television in the State for one year experiment led to the demand for retaining the infrastructure to enable telecast of terrestrial programs from Delhi. The government decided to continue the terrestrial TV transmission in the SITE covered areas even after the completion of the experimental project as it wanted to make optimum use of the existing infrastructure in six states. Accordingly, TV transmitters were re-started to meet the needs of education and development in Jaipur in Rajasthan (March 1, 1977), Gulbarga in Karnataka (September 3, 1977), Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh (October 23, 1977) and Sambalpur in Orissa (April 30, 1978).

Thus television formally got a firm footing in the State of Karnataka at Gulbarga located in the northern region on September 3, 1977 exactly a year after the SITE program ended. The

infrastructure of the pilot TV experiment was retained and revamped as a television station to serve the development needs of that region.

Based on the national policy of establishing Doordarshan Regional network of terrestrial channels in all states to meet the multilingual needs the regional TV station, Bangalore Doordarshan was established in Bangalore on January 1, 1981. A temporary HPT- High Power Transmitter was erected on the then 21 storied tallest building in Banaglore, the Vishveshwaryya Tower and programs were re-telecast from Madras and Mumbai Stations for few hours in a day to the viewers in Karnataka. On August 15, 1982 Indian television switched over from black and white to colour telecast due to government's decision for live telecast of Asian Games from imported outdoor broadcasting vans. In order to meet the demands for the telecast of Kannada programs, a temporary TV studio was established in the Vishveshwariah towers on November 19, 1983 and began the telecast of Kannada news. The telecast of Kannada films, film songs and Kannada news during few hours in a day increased the demand for Kannada programs reducing the slot for Marathi and Tamil programs which dominated Kannada TV in the early days. Since the reach of the signals was confined to the radius of 20 kms in Bangalore, the people from other regions demanded the expansion of television relay services. Due to increase in viewership and bowing to the market forces, Doordarshan opened the flood gates of Kannada television to commercials on November 4, 1983. LPTs- Low Power Transmitters were established for the relay of national and Bangalore's regional programs in 1984 in the districts of Mysore, Mangalore, Davangere, Bijapur, Bellary, Gadag, Raichur, Dharwad, Belgaum, Hospet, Hassan, Tiptur, Kodagu and Shimoga covering most parts of the state. The HPTs and LPTs required erection of 20-40ft antenna on housetops to catch the signals. During 1980s Karnataka's skyline was dotted with tall poles over roof tops and people were willing to invest in very expensive colour tv sets and heavy antenna infrastructure. The starting of national service by Doordarshan consisting of a two hour news and entertainment for the entire nation through INSAT -1A in 1982 gave an impetus to the expansion of regional television including Kannada services. The success of classic daily soap Hum Log on national network encouraged Bangalore Doordarshan to introduce sponsored programs on March 14, 1985 and saw the telecast of the first Kannada soap. Bangalore got a state of art television studio and relay station in J.C.Nagar with a huge tower constructed and inaugurated on January 16, 1988. Its formal telecast from a permanent studio started on February 4, 1988 thus putting an end to the make shift studio arrangement in

Vishweshwariah towers. All the relay transmitters in the state were hooked to Bangalore Doordarshan on November 1, 1990 facilitating access of Kannada programs. The expansion spree of HPTs and LPTs in Karnataka changed the media scenario and means of entertainment of people forever with the establishment of 23 relay centres by the end of 1993.

Satellite TV invaded India in 1991 and revolutionized the television broadcasting. The entry of foreign owned private television channels to India posed a challenge to Doordarshan and compelled it to switch over from terrestrial to satellite technology. Besides terrestrial TV channel, the satellite Kannada regional language channel was launched on August 15, 1994 and was called Regional Language Satellite Channel - the DD-9. So, Karnataka had two Regional channels to begin with, one terrestrial and the other satellite. In order to compete with Kannada private channels like Udaya News which had then started, DD-9 became 24 hr channel on January 1, 2000. The Satellite Channel was later rechristened as *Chandana*. DD Kannada or *Chandana* is one of the 11 regional language satellite channels in India. The other regional language satellite channels are DD North-East, DD Bengali, DD Gujarati, DD Kashir (Srinagar), DD Malayalam, DD *Sahyadri* (Marathi), DD Oriya, DD Punjabi, DD *Podhigai* (Tamil )and DD *Saptagiri* (Telugu).

### **THE FIRST PRIVATE SATELLITE KANNADA CHANNEL- UDAYA TV**

The expansion of DD-9 in Karnataka and its popularity created a fertile market for privately owned satellite TV channel players. The first to grab the opportunity is Sun TV Network group - the Tamil TV monolith that introduced a bouquet of language channels including Udaya TV in Kannada on June 4, 1994. Sun TV Network is a multilingual privately owned TV empire that has created a niche for itself in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada TV market. The DD-9, a state run conservative news and information based channel peppered with few entertainment content was no match to Udaya TV which was a mass entertainment channel to the core. Udaya TV swayed the masses with its USP of telecasting Kannada films and film songs and it easily captured the Kannada TV market as there were no competitors. Udaya TV easily cut into the viewership of Doordarshan and reigned supreme between 1994-2000 as it had only DD to compete with capturing advertising market and became hugely popular and successful consequently increasing its earnings by manifolds. With the telecast of variety of programs like soaps, film music, news, films, comedy, life style and spiritual, Udaya TV became

a mass channel having viewership in both urban and rural areas. To retain all kinds of viewers under its umbrella, Udaya TV started a bouquet of Kannada Channels.

The Udaya TV grew by leaps and bounds in Karnataka due to its ownership by Sun TV Network, perhaps largest media empire in South India reaching over 90 million households with 33 language TV channels in 4 south Indian languages. The group owns television channels, FM Radio stations, Newspapers, Magazines and cable distribution services and is the finest example of cross media ownership in Tamil Nadu. But it never endeavoured to such an venture in Karnataka. The advertising revenue became the monopoly of Udaya TV and it goes to its credit for opening a first of its kind 24x7 news channel in Kannada *Udaya Varthegalu* (News) as early as 1997 changing the perception of news in regional media market and posing a challenge to Kannada print media. The competition with Udaya TV made DD-9 to refurbish its branding by renaming it in 2000 as *Chandana* meaning 'sandal paste' in the land of sandal wood known for beautiful fragrance and sanctity. The branding of DD-9 helped and Chandana with its new programming was widely welcomed by the Kannadigas. Nevertheless, the challenge of Chandana was to sustain the audience it attracted in the market.

Kannada TV saw an influx of a battery of new entrants with Udaya TV of Sun Group launching Ushe TV in the last week of May 2000. Ushe TV was introduced as an entertainment channel telecasting movies and music by buying the movie rights of Kannada films. After a decade, Ushe TV became Udaya Movies. Udaya TV established a trend of multi-channel ownership by opening theme based TV channels in Kannada. Today, it owns six Kannada TV channels including Udaya Comedy and Chintu TV in order to reach different kind of audience consisting of children, youth, men and women. The oldest news channel in Kannada, Udaya News was shut on October 24, 2017 by Sun TV Network for business reasons owing to substantial losses and low viewership share.

### **Other Initiatives in Kannada Television**

The Marathi TV Channel, *Prabhat* joined the TV boom in Karnataka by launching *Suprabhata* in May 2000. In the absence of original programs, the channel closed down in 2001. The channel aimed to capture the market before the launch of ETV but could not sustain the pressures of crowded entertainment market. Kannada TV industry provided business opportunities for big players. The third big media group to enter the state is the Mumbai based Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd owned by media tycoon Subhash Chandra who gave India the first

Indian owned language TV channel. Zee made an early foray to enter small screen in the State by launching a new TV channel, *Asianet Kaveri* in collaboration with Asianet, the media giant of Malayalam TV market, in June 2000 on a 50:50 joint venture. The channel failed to make an impact on the viewers resulting in its closure in 2005.

### **ETV Kannada and Colors Kannada**

Kannada TV market was flooded with two giants namely Udaya TV and ETV in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century with daily soaps, box office hits, talk shows, news and family dramas. Udaya TV met its competitor when the ETV Kannada was launched on December 10, 2000 in Karnataka creating a stage for stiff competition to capture viewership and a big chunk of slice in advertising pie. ETV, the second big private channel in Karnataka changed the perception of entertainment and it soon earned reputation as a quality channel patronized by urban educated middle class vis-a-vis Udaya TV's mass audience. The language, content and the artists of ETV created a niche in Kannada TV history redefining teleserials and TV news. ETV Kannada was started by another media giant *Eenadu* group owned by Ramoji Rao in 2000. The group was renowned for starting *Eenadu*, the largest circulated Telugu newspaper in then undivided Andhra Pradesh. Initially Ramoji Group became business empire owning newspapers, TV channels and businesses in film production, food and finance. In the decade of 2000, ETV owned 12 regional language news and General Entertainment Channels in Telugu, Kannada, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It also started ETV Kannada News channel called ETV News Kannada on March 19, 2014 to compete with Udaya News.

The man who changed the fortunes of ETV Kannada is none other than a theatre and a film personality, T.N.Seetharam, the man with a Midas touch. Moving away from formula based packaged entertainment programs, TN Seetharam gifted Kannada viewers with high quality story based teleserials providing clean entertainment. The director cum actor gave mega serials in Kannada based on political satire with a social message revolving around the lives of the middle class family. His TV serials *Mayamruga*, *Manvantara*, *Muktha*, and *Mahaparva* became hugely popular. He was the first small screen director to introduce the concept of dialogue with the audience by organizing open houses in different cities in Karnataka to get their feedback. He produced top rated quality Kannada story based TV serials and marketed them successfully



bringing huge profits to the ETV channel. Perhaps the credit for making ETV, a household name goes to T.N.Seetharam.

ETV Kannada also won the hearts of *Kannadigas* with a variety of programs catering to the needs of important sections of society including farmers. The program *Annadata* is a TV program on agriculture and a first of its kind by any private TV channel in Kannada. It is an initiative started by ETV group in all languages across the country to reach the farmers.

ETV started 24x7 news channel ETV News Kannada on March 19, 2014. On April 26, 2015, ETV Kannada was newly branded as ETV Colors with the change of ownership from Ramoji Rao Group to Reliance's Ambani group. Colors comes under Indian network Channel 18 that runs television channels like CNN-IBN, CNBC-TV18 and Colors. The parent investors are Reliance industries owned by Mukesh Ambani who started making footprints in media industry with huge investment in TV18 group that funded purchase of Eenadu TV media group by investing to the tune of \$450 million in its cross-media venture. ETV Kannada will soon have IBN tag as the group owns a conglomerate of channels in India. The change of ownership and rebranding has poised ETV in the league of highly successful corporate group in the country. Reliance group owns 100 percent stake in all ETV channels including Kannada and 50 percent stake in Telugu Channels. Today ETV Kannada now Colors is owned by corporate group which will greatly influence its content, technology and delivery platforms.

### **Zee Kannada**

Zee group independently launched Zee Kannada in 2006 after the failure of its collaborative venture with Asianet (Asianet Kaveri) in 2000. Zee Kannada entered the state in May 2006 armed with huge content of daily soaps, reality shows, talk shows and game shows to distinguish itself from its rival channels. Talk shows like *Baduku Jataka Bhandi* - a program on people's personal family disputes and problems, popularized Zee Kannada. In 2014, a simple cookery show called *Oggarane Dabbi* made Zee Kannada a household name. At the national level, Zee group was the first to launch a 24x7 food channel, *Zee Khana Khazana* in India. The full fledged production house has no dearth of creative directors and resources. The cookery show in Kannada is hugely popular among women audience. The star of the cookery show is its host Murli who has won the hearts of its viewers with his unique dialogue delivery. The program has reached heights of popularity with good weekly ratings. The cookery show has also published program based cookery books never initiated by any TV channels in the state.



### **TV9 and its foray into News**

The channel which is leading the band wagon of Kannada small screen with sustained high ratings is TV9 Karnataka. It is a 24x7 news channel started on December 9, 2006 under Associated Broadcasting Company pvt.ltd (ABCL) owned by Ravi Prakash based in Andhra Pradesh. The channel is most watched in the state because of its unique way of news presentation. It has changed the format of news presentation, news reading and visual presentation. Showing unedited news clippings and accessing news of crime, accidents and conflicts in the remotest parts of the State are its strengths. The channel has been criticized for sensationalizing news and for introducing crime based programs targeting police and beaurocrates. Nevertheless, it has gained popularity due to its huge network of news bureaus created across the state that telecast local and regional news on par with national and international news in Kannada. It focuses more on politics and crime and banks on cricket programs in regional language besides giving live coverage of news. The channel is known for titling the programs in a unique lingo- a mix of Kannada and English words like *Filmy Fonda* , Just Bangalore, *Namma* Metro, *Nammuru*, nation@9, Warrant, Ladies Club, Movie *Masala* and Boundary Line. The channel is the first to introduce breaking news concept in Kannada news and even got into serious trouble in the news about Polio vaccination news for irresponsible journalism and incurred public wrath. Encouraged by the continuous high ratings in the small screen, TV9 launched one more channel in English NEWS9, a city centric news channel for Bangaloreans.

### **Kasthuri : Media and Politics**

For the first time in Karnataka, politicians made foray into Kannada TV with a precedent already set by Tamil Nadu's DMK's Dayanidi Maran's Sun TV Network which owns Udaya TV in the State. Kasthuri the General Entertainment Channel was launched on September 26, 2007 under the banner, Kasthuri Medias Pvt Ltd, by the political family of former Prime Minister H.Devegowda in the name of his daughter-in-law Anitha Kumaraswamy who also happens to be the wife of H.D.Kumaraswamy, the former Chief Minister of Karnataka. The pride of this channel is it is the first channel to be owned by a *Kannadiga*- the son of the soil as rest of the other channels are owned by non-*Kannadigas*. A mix of news, films, movies, daily soaps, talk shows, music, spirituality and sports form the content of Kasthuri. It is popular because of its political affiliation. The group launched one more News channel called Kasthuri News 24 in

2011. Recently, it is believed that the H.D.Kumaraswamy has leased the entertainment channel, while keeping the news channel under the control of political family. Unlike DMK's Sun Network that has monopolized Tamil Nadu, Kasthuri could not rule Karnataka and is way behind most of the top channels in the ratings war.

### **GROWTH OF CHANNELS BETWEEN 2007 - 2017**

Kannada TV was flooded with new channels between 2007-14 to catch the eye balls and to cut into the viewership of already established channels like Udaya, ETV and TV9. Asianet Communications that operates Malayalam Channels was bought by Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar with 51% stake in 2006. Under this banner, *Suvarna* TV was launched in 2007 by Rajeev Chandrashekhar, a businessman and a second term Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka. He is a media mogul like Rupert Murdoch by taking over Kannada Prabha, the Kannada newspaper established by illustrious Ramnath Goenka from the prestigious stables of the New Indian Express group. A politician-businessman owning media in Karnataka, Rajeev Chandrashekhar is owning Asianet News in Malayalam and Suvarna News in Kannada and has established cross media ownership in Kannada media market for the first time. The Asianet News Network Pvt.Ltd of Jupiter Media Entertainment Ventures group has established three Kannada channels namely, Asianet Suvarna (2007), Suvarna Plus (2013) and Suvarna News 24X7 (March 31, 2008). The news channel has made its presence in social media network and is consistently earning third position in the average weekly ratings.

The theme based channels were not confined to news but it spread to other areas like music, children, comedy and religion. The launching of Sri Sankara TV, a multilingual spiritual channel on December 21, 2008 filled the dearth of spiritual channels in Kannada. The channel is dedicated to the propagation of Hindu culture, tradition and values. The Sun TV Network started a children's channel, Chintu TV on April 12, 2009 claiming to be the first Kannada television meant exclusively for kids. Music lovers had one more channel competing with Udaya music, with the launching of the Raj Musix Kannada in 2009, owned by the famous regional broadcaster, Raj Television Network Ltd of Tamil Nadu, owning Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada Channels. The group also floated Raj News Kannada in 2012 competing with its counterpart in Tamil Nadu, the Sun Network's Udaya Varthegalu (News).

The crowded news channels had one more new entrant in the market, the Janasri News on February 18, 2011 floated by the then powerful mining chieftains from Bellary, G. Janardana

Reddy and B.Sriramulu who are facing the heat of CBI battle in mining cases coupled with problems on both political and business front. The channel claims to be a 24x7 Kannada news and infotainment television channel and was started to confront negative coverage in the media about allegations of corruption during the regime of former Chief Minister B.S.Yeddyurappa. After their downfall, the ownership changed hands to Odyssey Corporation Ltd, based in Gujarat and now it is part of Yash Broadcasting Industries Pvt..Ltd.

On June 20, 2010, a news channel Samaya News was launched that joined the band wagon of crowded news media sector. It was started by Satish Jarkiholi, the Small Scale Industries minister in the present Congress government in Karnataka from Gokak and later was sold to Murugesh Nirani, Minister of Heavy Industries in the present congress government and now is owned by Vijay Tata of Andhra Pradesh. Few ministers and politicians are believed to hold stakes in this channel. The news market got one more 24x7 Kannada news Channel Public TV on February 12, 2012 by Writemen Media Pvt. Ltd, Bangalore. Many print media journalists own stakes in the channel. H.R.Ranganath, the former editor of Kannada Prabha daily is the Chairman and Managing Director of the channel giving impetus to the credibility of the channel. The channel enjoys good ratings and its forte is regional and local news supported by its network of district wise news bureaus. The group backed by the Lahari audio group's Manohar Naidu and few film directors launched Public Music Channel on September 28, 2014 giving one more music channel to music lovers in Kannada. Sun Network gave one more channel Udaya Comedy in 2011 after the huge success of its comedy programs in Udaya TV which was popularized by well known writers, humorists and satirists in Kannada literature. Btv News is a new entrant in the market launched on July 10, 2014 and was inaugurated by the present Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah. Owned by a Kannadiga G.M.Kumar, a journalist turned realtor and now a media businessman from Mandya, the channel is making news for all wrong reasons. In December 2014, the channel was dragged into court by Congress MLA of Karnataka Assembly Priya Krishna in a civil defamation suit demanding damages worth Rs 100 crores against the channel creating a record in media history as this is the first defamation case against any media demanding Rs. 100 crores from a TV channel.

Kannada TV market has attracted many media houses to establish new TV channels. On June 11, 2015, Prajaa TV owned by Ravi Ganiga was launched claiming no compromise on professional ethics and is in the race to gain TRPs vying for the shrinking advertisement market

estimated at Rs.100 crore. Following the success of Kannada Newspapers, Vijaya Karnataka and Vijavani, politician cum transport business magnate from North Karnataka, Vjay Sankeshwar of VRL Media launched 24x7 news channel, Dighviajy on April 5, 2017. One of most successful newspapers, Vijaya Karnataka, owned by VRL Media that created new wave in Kannada Journalism was acquired by India's largest media house, The Times of India Group in June 2006. The VRL group yet again launched one more Kannada newspaper, Vijayavani in 2012 that rose to become the largest circulated Kannada newspaper breaking previous circulation records. Dighvijay TV is from the group of long standing leader in the print business and obviously is speculated to create new viewership in the market and pose a tough competition to other Kannada TV channels.

### Chronological Mapping of the History of Kannada TV Channels

Sl. No.	List of Kannada Channels	Launched Year
1.	SITE Experiment	August 1, 1975 to July 31, 1976 Gulbarga, Raichur, Bijapur
2.	DD Station, Gulbarga	September 3, 1977
3.	Bangalore Doordarshan	January 1, 1981
4.	Bangalore Regional TV Station	January 16, 1988
5.	Regional Language Satellite TV Channel - DD 9	August 15, 1994
6.	Udaya TV	June 4, 1994
7.	Udaya Varthegaulu (News)	1997
8.	Ushe TV	May 2000 -2012
9.	ETV Kannada	December 10, 2000
	Became Colors Kannada	April 26, 2015
10.	Asianet Kaveri	June 2000-2005
11.	Suprabhata	May 2000-2001
12.	TV9 Kannada	December 9, 2006
13.	Zee Kannada	May 2006
14.	Suvarna	2007
15.	Kasthuri	September 26, 2007
16.	Suvarna News 24x7	March 31, 2008
17.	Sri Sankara TV	December 21, 2008
18.	Chintu TV	April 12, 2009
19.	Raj Musix Kannada	2009
20.	Udaya movies	January 2010
21.	Samaya 24x7	June 20, 2010

22.	Janasri News	February 18, 2011
23.	Kasturi News 24x7	2011
24.	Udaya Comedy	2011
25.	Raj News Kannada	2012
26.	Public TV	February 12, 2012
27.	Suvarana Plus	2013
28.	Udaya Music	2013
29.	Etv News Kannada	March 19, 2014
30.	Raj News Kannada	2014
31.	B TV	July 10 ,2014
32.	Public Music	September 28, 2014
33.	Praja TV	June 11,2015
34.	Colors Super	2016
35.	Star Sports 1 Kannada	2017
36.	Dighvijay	April 5, 2017

*TAM Ratings of Kannada TV Channels -22/3/2015 to 28/3/2015*

1.	KARNATAKA			Universe	0	
2.		WK 10	WK 11	WK 12	WK 13	Diff
3.	TV9 KARNATAKA	134.98	121.8	182.58	145.15	(37.43)
4.	PUBLIC TV	44.92	45.8	64.28	61.63	(2.65)
5.	Suvarna News 24x7	46.15	45.58	61.12	55.65	(5.47)
6.	Btv NEWS	24.6	24.23	39.5	43.5	4.00
7.	ETV NEWS KANNADA	28.07	23.57	26.68	26.74	0.06
8.	Samaya News	4.51	6.25	11.99	25.11	13.12
9.	Udaya News	19.34	21.55	20.52	22.67	2.15
10.	Kasthuri Newz 24	15.15	10.29	21.32	17.72	(3.60)
11.	Janasri	8.54	8.36	8.74	8.79	0.05
12.	Raj News Kannada	8.52	6.74	9.69	7.46	(2.23)
13.	UDAYA	582.59	608.23	582.24	527.47	(54.77)
14.	ETV Kannada	435.7	473.25	419.01	481.38	62.37
15.	Suvarna	341.96	338.25	335.77	321.83	(13.94)
16.	Z Kannada	235.83	243.04	227.63	229.17	1.54
17.	Plus Suvarna	121.12	156.92	154.99	164.06	9.07
18.	K Kasturi	61.87	49.58	42.11	40.27	(1.84)
19.	DD Chandana	24.08	24.37	31.21	24.62	(6.59)
20.	Udaya Movies	171.01	179	174.39	192.63	18.24
21.	Udaya Music	72.69	71.4	64.54	64.62	0.08

22.	Public Music	29.12	28.97	27.95	25.77	(2.18)
23.	RAJ MUSIX KANNADA	22.32	16.3	11.84	8.9	(2.94)
24.	Udaya Comedy	60.29	56.07	51.05	55.09	4.04
25.	Chintu TV	17.83	23.59	18.19	18.92	0.73

## CONCLUSION

The regional television sector in Karnataka with a history of over three decades has a matrix of over 25 TV channels aiming to capture a market consisting of 60 percent (Census 2011) of TV households spread across 30 districts. The Kannada language faces a tough competition as the viewers in the erstwhile regions under Nizam's Hyderabad, Bombay Presidency and Madras Presidency in many districts of the state are staunch viewers of Tamil, Telugu and Marathi programs. The Kannada TV basket consists of 60 percent of TV households as against 90 percent in Tamil Nadu, the highest in the country and 76.8 percent in the most literate state, Kerala. The advertising revenue of Tamil television is huge to the tune of Rs.1300 crore while Andhra Pradesh comes second with ad revenue of Rs.900 and Karnataka and Kerala each have a revenue of over Rs.600 crore.

As per the TAM ratings of March 2015, the TV sector can be analyzed under two important sectors namely News Channels and General Entertainment Channels (GEC). In the news segment, TV9 consistently holds number one slot followed by Public TV and Suvarana News 24x7. In the GEC sector, Udaya TV leads the team followed by ETV /Colors Kannada and Suvarna. Therefore Suvarna continues its number 3 slot in both News and GEC segments. As on August 2017 Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) ratings show TV9 leading the news channels followed by Public TV and Suvarna News. The rest of the 10 Kannada news channels have low share of viewership. Uadya News could not withstand competition with TV9 and therefore decided to exit. Other channels like Kasturi News and Dighvijay 24x7 are the notable players in the ratings war. Apart from the 13 existing news channels, at least three more, Focus TV, TV1 and TV5, are on the pipeline to join the crowded market.

Today it requires huge resources and strategies to survive in the volatile TV market in this region. TV is big business that calls for huge investment and it is estimated that it requires over Rs.50 crore to start a News Channel. Perhaps it costs more to establish a regional TV news channel than a GEC which costs anywhere between Rs.20-25 crore. Kannada language market

has a comparatively small viewership than other regional broadcasting markets. In order to optimize ad revenue, TV channels under cross media ownership are resorting to dubbing of popular soaps and buying franchise of reality shows and localizing other language programs hurting the interests of local talent and creativity in the process.

The recent example is the adoption of a hugely popular national Hindi soap *Balika Vadhu* to reach Kannada audience. The serial is based on child marriages which is rampant in Rajasthan and therefore it not only becomes irrelevant but there is also a danger of reinforcing old beliefs and tradition in the guise of social message. Such attempts can do more harm than good to the regional audience. Dubbing is a business proposition and it can never promote regional art, culture and resources. Launched on 21 July 2008, *Balika Badhu - Kachchi Umar Ke Pakke Rishte* is a hugely popular Hindi soap opera of Colors TV channel that completed a record breaking 1909 episodes as on May 30, 2015. The serial reached a TVR of 6.5% in the 10<sup>th</sup> week, it also enjoyed a TRP of 5.9. It consistently remained on the top in the ratings chart recorded a TVR of 7 in 2009 and Gross Rating Point (GRP) of 1.34%. The newly formed Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) has also given favourable ratings of 4.1 in May 2015. The queen of soaps, *Balika Vadhu* has been already dubbed in Telugu "*Chinnari pellikuthuru*" and is one of the top three popular soaps in Telugu language Television. The remake of the serial *Balika Vadhu* in Kannada titled, *Putta Gowri Maduve* has helped Colors Kannada TV to raise in popularity chart. The Kannada version has successfully completed 1500 episodes in December 2017 and remains No.1 soap in Kannada regional TV. Colors TV's strategy of remaking popular Hindi serials in regional languages has paid rich dividends. The remake of the popular Hindi serial, *Madhubala* in Kannada with a title *Ashwini Nakshatra* has created star value for TV artistes hitherto unknown in regional language industry. Remake of the *Big Boss*, the Hindi reality show has changed the fortunes of Colors Kannada making it to be the one of most popular GEC- General Entertainment Channels in Kannada. The Kannada version of Bigg Boss changed the programme style, format and dialogue delivery in Kannada. *Jhalak Dikhla Jaa's* Kannada version '*Takadhimata Dancing Star*' has opened flood gates of Kannada TV channels to the producers of remake and dubbed programmes.

Big corporate ventures are buying stakes in the fast growing regional entertainment market by branding TV channels. Market segmentation on linguistic basis has led to the control of key market by big corporate empire enjoying the support of advertisers in a big way. The



arrival of big players in Kannada television industry has ultimately set the benchmark for the takeover of language TV channels. The purpose of regional TV gets defeated as businessmen who are neither familiar with culture nor with the demography of the region hold the reins of the language media causing irreparable damage to the cause of language and culture of the State.

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